

TO: Michigan State House Committee on
Natural Resources, Great Lakes, Land Use and Environment
Rep. David Palsrok, Chair

From: Kimberly O'Connor – 1st Grade School Teacher
Lake Ann Elementary, Benzie County Central Schools

Re: HB 4803
Post Labor Day School Start For All Michigan Public Schools

I would like to begin by thanking each of you for allowing me the opportunity to address your committee and, a special thanks to Committee Chairman Palsrok who also shares the double duty of serving as my Representative to the Michigan State House.

My purpose today in visiting Lansing is to add to the discussion as to the merits of HB 4803 requiring a post Labor Day start for all Michigan Public Schools. My hope is to persuade each of you as well as those assembled that this legislation is the right thing to do for families, for schools and for the overall economy of our state as relates to the **Promise of Summer**.

My Family and I are blessed each and every summer by having to go no farther then our backyard to swim and play in the Betsie River. We also take part in and enjoy many of the events in northern Michigan as well as all of the many tourists from neighboring states and beyond that come to experience our special place. For me, summer in northern Michigan is generational beginning with my father, a Fire Chief at Greektown and my mother, also a teacher from Detroit. This time every year my family would make the trek from Detroit to a small quiet lake in eastern Manistee County to spend the entire summer with Dad commuting to and from work. All of us looked to this time with family and friends as a privilege and a much needed break from the fast pace of school, work and the city.

County = BENZIE
Municipality = BENZONIA TOWNSHIP
Ward = 00 Precinct = 001
Street = FAIRWAY DR

Number Apt	Name	Age	AV	P	R	D	PP	P00	G00	P02	G02	V03	Q1S	Q2Y	Q3	Q4	Q5
8282	RUTGERS; DELWYN	62	X		X		X		X	X	X						
8282	RUTGERS; LINDA	64	X		X		X		X	X	X						
8291	RUST; DOUGLAS	74										X					
8291	RUST; JOAN	70										X					
8296	SETTERBO; DONALD	74	X						X	X	X	X					
8296	SETTERBO; NANCY	74	X						X	X	X	X					
8319	WIEZOREK; CATHERINE	64							X		X	X					
8319	WIEZOREK; KENNETH	64							X		X	X					
8343	TAYLOR; MARY	69					X	X	X		X						
8343	TAYLOR; ROBERT	58					X	X	X		X						
8398	LEVEILLEE; LAWRENCE	73	X		X		X		X		X	X					
8398	LEVEILLEE; PRUDENCE	56	X		X		X		X		X	X					
8407	SLONAKER; CAROL	75	X						X		X	X					
8407	SLONAKER; HERBERT	75	X						X		X						
8416	SMITH; MARY	80			X												
8480	QUICK; PATRICIA	66				X	X		X	X	X						
8490	MOSS; CAMILLE	46					X		X	X	X	X					
8490	MOSS; DANIELLE	19															
8490	MOSS; PETER	51					X		X	X	X	X					
8500	PEPPER; MERL	67	X						X		X						
8500	PEPPER; NANCY	67	X						X		X						
8505	KEILLOR; AARON	26							X								
8505	KEILLOR; KATHLEEN	50			R	X											
8519	RIESCHL; MATTHEW	46							X		X						
8544	HECKMAN; BETTY	84	X		R	X			X	X	X	X					
8544	HECKMAN; ROBERT	87	X						X	X	X	X					
8549	CLARK; CHRISTOPHER	29							X								
8549	CLARK; TISHA	27															
8567	DAVIDSON; CAROL	62							X	X	X	X					
8567	DAVIDSON; STEPHEN	62					X		X	X	X	X					
8586	CASE; MATTHEW	31	X		X				X	X	X						
8586	CASE; TAMMY	30			X				X	X	X	X					
8639	BOHNHORST; SUZANNE	55	X			X			X	X	X	X					
8639	BOHNHORST; THOMAS	53				X			X	X	X	X					
8676	HAYS; JOHN	62					X		X								
8676	HAYS; TERESA	45							X								
8737	ROBLING; CHARLOTTE	87	X			X			X	X	X	X					
8737	ROBLING; MARY	55	X			X			X	X	X	X					

Today, we have seen the promise of summer eroded by the many responsibilities that tug at all of us both professionally and socially. My profession as a 1st grade teacher requires me to pursue college credits in order to maintain my status as a teacher as well as my desire to grow as an educator. This would be virtually impossible during the school year so, many teachers take classes immediately following the end of school. Combine this with the inevitability of snow days (and the make-up required) and our June keeps us close to home. It is however, July and August that I can enjoy special time with my husband and our three young daughters.

It is the latter part of August however, that has been lost in many parts of our state and Benzie County. Though I'm not really sure when or why this happened, it has taken one the warmest periods of the year and placed teachers and students in the classroom. In our particular case at Lake Ann Elementary, we do not have the benefit of air conditioning. Think if you will, of sitting with your fellow democrat and republican colleagues in session during August without air-conditioning, think then about being in a room on a 97-degree day with 26 children trying to teach. I'll let you decide on which is the better imagery.

This year our school will begin on August 29th which means that I will need to begin preparing my classroom on August 15th. Let me add at this point, that I chose to become a teacher and this too is a privilege and a deep passion of mine. But, if you consider that those schools starting the last week of August will also result in student's early beginning of band and athletics, the entire month reverts to the fast pace of back-to-school hysteria and a premature end to summer. Keep in mind that school districts now work within a system of 1,098 state-mandated instructional hours that still provides for local control over our entire school year.

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Number Apt	Name	Age	AV	P	R	D	PP00	P00	G00	P02	G02	V03	Q1S	Q2Y	Q3	Q4	Q5
998	TOWNSEND; DAL	37			X	X	X		X		X	X					
998	TOWNSEND; JENNIFER	35			X	X	X		X		X	X					
1014	ROYER; JONATHAN	67	X						X	X	X						
1014	ROYER; LYNN	62	X							X	X						
1014	TALBERT; LILLIAN	90	X						X	X	X						

Speaking purely as a parent, our quality time together as a family is shortened in terms of when we can go elsewhere in our state forcing us to compete with many others in a tight window for camping, golfing and visiting restaurants and resorts. You should also consider our tourism industry which lose their student employees when other states are still sending tourists here. The results are lost wages to student workers, the decreased business cycle of seasonal tourism and the long wait until next summer.

For a state like ours with all of it's natural wonders, why wouldn't we want to do a better job of harnessing the beauty that surrounds us? This is the question that you all need to decide. My hope is that the discussion here today and those that follow will not only allow you to determine the feelings of your respective constituents, but will also cause you to pause and view personally what summer means to you and your family.

I would like to close by saying that my opinions stated may not be the views of my local teachers union or that of Benzie County Central Schools. It is however the express wishes of my three primary constituents, Maren age 9, Madison age 8 and Hadley who just turned five and enjoys her birthday each year on the first day of Summer.

Thank you!

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Street = ELDRIDGE RD

Number Apt	Name	Age	AV	P	R	D	PP00	P00	G00	P02	G02	V03	Q1S	Q2Y	Q3	Q4	Q5
48	KEHR; CHARLES	53	X				X		X	X	X	X					
48	KEHR; LINDA	53	X				X		X	X	X	X					
73	BOEHM; CATHERYN	70	X						X		X						
73	BOEHM; JAMES	69	X				X		X		X						
120	ELDRIDGE; G	85			X		X		X	X	X						
120	ELDRIDGE; MARION	86			X		X		X	X	X						
150	STOLZ; PAULA	47							X								
176	CARNES; MICHELLE	52															
256	FOWLER; CAROL	47															
256	FOWLER; KENT	45															
370	NAGY; JESSICA	24							X	X	X	X					
370	RHODES; MARK	37															
371	FRANKLIN; TED	83															
468	BURLEY; MARILYN	48			X												
468	BURLEY; MICHAEL	51			X												
721	HENRY; BETTY	83	X				X		X	X	X	X					
734	CLEGHORN; DELBERT	78			X		X		X				X				
734	CLEGHORN; JOAN	76			X		X		X				X				